

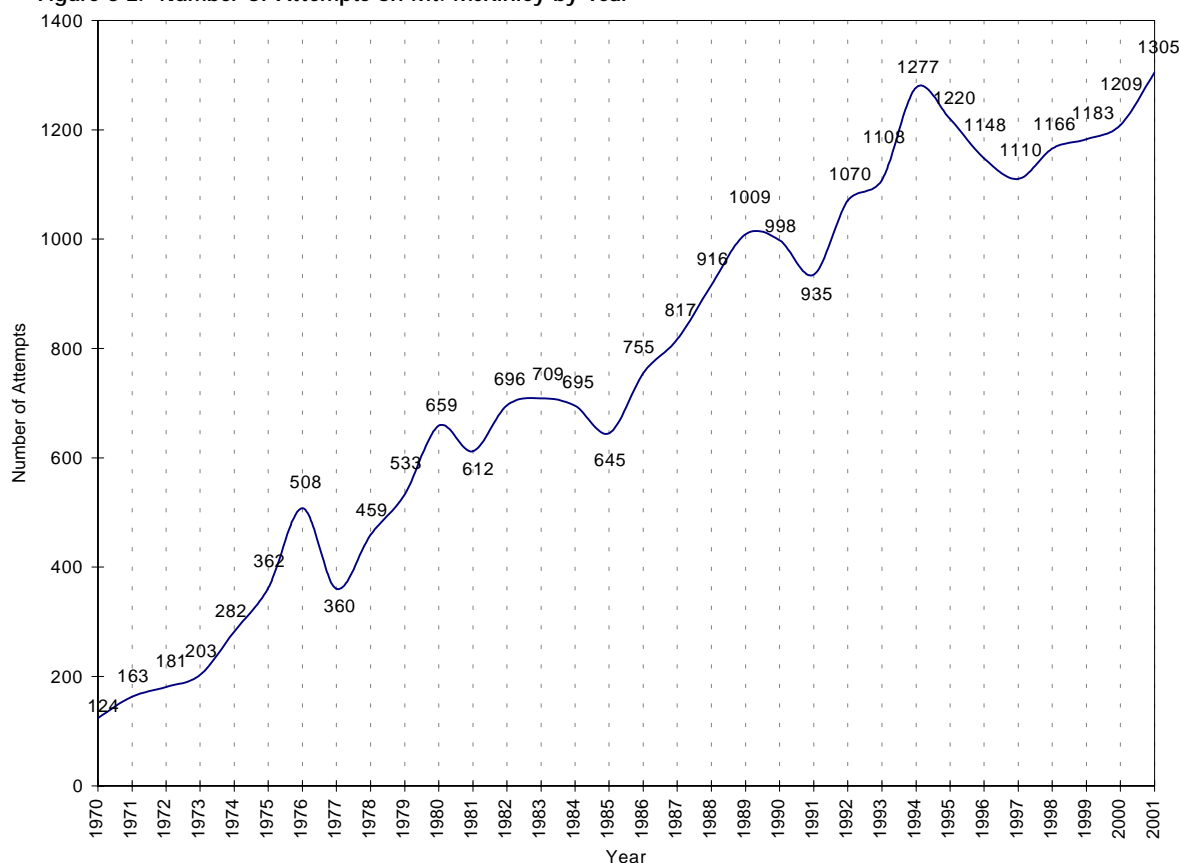
follow the mining access route, about 1.5 to 2 miles roundtrip. Groups hiking in the Skyline Drive area usually hike up or down the Friday Creek drainage to Wickersham Dome and back down to Kantishna. Some groups are shuttled up Skyline Drive to start at higher locations, and then hike back. The Kantishna lodges are able to bring their clients into the Wonder Lake area for guided hikes, including use of the McKinley Bar Trail. One Kantishna lodge operator – Denali National Park Wilderness Centers – has pre-ANILCA historic rights to lead guided hikes in the Old Park and brings clients by van as far east as Highway Pass.

About one party per day visits each hiking area with group sizes averaging 12 to 17 people. Duration of the guided hikes varies from 2 to 6 hours. The lodges coordinate group hikes so that usually no more than one group visits a hiking area at any one time. This coordination helps to assure that participants have a wilderness experience. Participation in the guided hikes offered by Kantishna businesses ranged from 5,096 to 7,300 people between 1995 and 1998. The annual average number of people participating in guided hiking in the Kantishna area for the same 4-year period was 6,043 people. Botanical walks averaged 445 people annually for the same period (NPS 2002a).

### Climbing and Mountaineering

Climbing and mountaineering are prominent recreational activities in Denali National Park and Preserve. Each year approximately 2,000 people participate in independent and guided expeditions on peaks in the Alaska Range in the park. Various glaciers in the park and preserve are also used for skiing, ice climbing, rock climbing, and alpine recreation courses.

**Figure 3-2: Number of Attempts on Mt. McKinley by Year**



Source: Denali National Park and Preserve Climbing Database

• Mount McKinley Mount McKinley is significant to the worldwide mountaineering community. Numerous peaks in the Alaska Range are climbed each year, but none has the appeal and drawing power of Mount McKinley, the highest peak (20,320 feet) on the North American continent. Compared to other peaks that are international destinations, accessing Mount McKinley is relatively easy and logistically simple using air transport. The mountain also offers significant challenges with glacier travel, severe temperatures, and extreme environmental conditions. The number of mountaineers attempting the peak has increased substantially in the last 30 years (figure 3-2).